



# VIOLENT DEATH IN VIRGINIA:

# 2003

Commonwealth of Virginia  
Virginia Department of Health  
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner  
September 2005

# CHIEF THE FROM LETTER

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner presents a new report, *Violent Death in Virginia: 2003*. It highlights the first year of data collected through the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). This system links information from multiple sources - forensic pathology, forensic science, law enforcement and vital records - in the hope of better demonstrating why violent death occurs. The goal is to provide timely, detailed information that is useful for public health planning, injury and violence prevention initiatives, and policy decisions.

This report takes important first steps in describing Virginia's violent deaths in greater depth. While many equate violent death with homicide, data revealed that the majority of our violent deaths resulted from suicide. But these data also shed light on those victim or event characteristics that contributed to violent death.

The following pages underscore the significance of violence as a public health problem. Violence respects no boundaries. Violence preys upon persons of all ages, from the very young to the elderly. Violence inflicts the most traumatic conclusion to life attainable through human behavior, interaction and circumstance. Violence claimed 1332 lives in Virginia in 2003.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner understands the devastating impact of violent death - on the victims, the families, communities and society. This report demonstrates the need for action. Through focused, collaborative efforts, the number of lives claimed by violence can be reduced.

***Marcella F. Fierro, M.D.***  
Chief Medical Examiner

# VIOLENT DEATH IN VIRGINIA: 2003

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Nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

This report was made possible through the support and efforts of many professionals and agencies who generously contributed their time and expertise to our violent death surveillance activities. Without your assistance, this report would not be possible.

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- ◆ Virginia Department of State Police
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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are roughly 50,000 suicides and homicides in the United States each year. Over 1,200 of these deaths occur in Virginia alone. Suicide and homicide rank among the leading killers of persons ages 1 to 39. Yet existing information often lacks depth of detail, limiting the ability to assess the specific characteristics or circumstances of such deaths. This, in turn, impedes public health planning, policy development, injury prevention, and violence control efforts.

Cognizant of gaps in violence-related information, public health leaders began pressing for a national violent death surveillance system in the late 1980s. Over the next few years, dozens of suicide prevention groups, medical associations, family violence prevention organizations and child advocacy groups joined in the charge. In December 2001, Congress responded to this need and appropriated funding for the CDC to develop and implement the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).<sup>1</sup>

NVDRS is a surveillance system that captures violent deaths that occur within a state's borders. The system is implemented at the state level where information from multiple sources - forensic pathology, forensic science, law enforcement, vital records and others - is linked. By linking information, this system can answer more questions and provide a clearer picture of when, where, how and why violent deaths occur. The primary goal of the system is to produce timely, detailed information on all violent deaths.

As defined by the World Health Organization, a violent death results from the intentional use of force or power against oneself, another person, group or community. The person(s) using the force need not have intended to kill another person. **Violent death types include suicide, homicide, unintentional firearm fatality, death from legal intervention, death from an undetermined manner, and death resulting from acts of terrorism.** Death from an undetermined manner is included as some cases may have documented circumstances suggestive of homicide or suicide, yet lack sufficient evidence to be ruled as intentional.<sup>2,3</sup>

In late 2002, the CDC made the first awards to six state health departments to implement NVDRS. Virginia received one of these awards and the distinction as the first medical examiner system to receive funding. Following the award, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) began statewide implementation of NVDRS, with data abstraction and data entry activities beginning in late 2003.

The data are prepared for the purpose of assisting injury and violence prevention, public health and public safety planning, and for policy change and development. The following data represent 2003 violent deaths of Virginia residents and non-residents where the violent injury and subsequent death occurred within Virginia's borders. As the types of violent death highlighted in this report are defined by NVDRS, the following data will differ from other mortality data published by the OCME, the Virginia Center for Health Statistics and the CDC.

The report begins with an overview of violent death, including basic demographic findings, death types, methods of fatal injury and highlighted findings. Subsequent sections on suicide, homicide, and unintentional firearm death follow a similar format but also detail the characteristics or relevant circumstances surrounding these types of violent death. A final section focuses on child death.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Violent Death Reporting System Coding Manual, (Atlanta, GA 2003), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Neither judicial execution nor accidental death—except unintentional firearm—is included.

# VIOLENT DEATH

## SECTION I:

Table 1. Number, Percent and Rate of Violent Death Victims in Virginia: 2003

	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	1022	76.7	28.1
Female	309	23.2	8.2
Unknown	1	0.1	-
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	866	65.0	15.7
Black	390	29.3	25.9
Hispanic	40	3.0	10.1
Other	30	2.2	8.3
Unknown	6	0.5	-
<b>Age Group</b>			
<1	15	1.1	15.1
1-4	14	1.1	3.6
5-9	10	0.7	2.1
10-14	14	1.1	2.7
15-19	93	7.0	18.3
20-24	172	12.9	32.5
25-34	245	18.4	24.1
35-44	262	19.7	22.2
45-54	216	16.2	20.1
55-64	118	8.9	15.8
65-74	91	6.8	20.5
75-84	51	3.8	17.6
85 and older	22	1.6	22.1
Unknown	9	0.7	-
<b>Violent Death Type</b>			
Suicide	799	60.0	10.8
Homicide	435	32.7	5.9
Undetermined	68	5.1	0.9
Unintentional Firearm	18	1.3	0.2
Legal Intervention	12	0.9	0.2
Terrorism	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Method of Fatal Injury</b>			
Firearm	791	59.4	-
Hanging or Strangulation or Asphyxiation	168	12.6	-
Poisoning	162	12.2	-
Sharp or Blunt Instrument	107	8.0	-
Drowning	21	1.5	-
Fire or Burn	13	1.0	-
Other	25	1.9	-
Unknown	45	3.4	-
<b>Medical Examiner District<sup>2</sup></b>			
Central	452	33.9	23.2
Northern	249	18.7	10.9
Tidewater	322	24.2	20.4
Western	309	23.2	19.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1332</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18.0</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons. Virginia's population in 2003 was estimated at 7,386,330.

<sup>2</sup>See page 42 for a listing of localities in each of Virginia's four Medical Examiner Districts.



## Highlighted Findings

- In 2003, violent death claimed 1332 lives in Virginia - or 3.6 deaths per day.
- The average age of violent death victims was 39 years.
- Persons ages 20-24 had the highest violent death rate at 32.5 per 100,000 which was 1.8 times the state violent death rate of 18.0 for 2003.
- Roughly three of every four victims were male.
- While almost two-thirds (65.0%) of the victims were White, the violent death rate was highest among Blacks (25.9 per 100,000).
- Blacks died from violent death at 1.6 times the rate of Whites and nearly 2.6 times the rate of Hispanics (25.9 per 100,000 compared to 15.7 for Whites and 10.1 for Hispanics).
- Central District OCME had the highest violent death rate (23.2 per 100,000) while the Northern District OCME had the lowest rate (10.9 per 100,000).
- Richmond City had the highest violent death rate of any locality in Virginia (61.6 per 100,000).
- The majority of deaths resulted from suicide (799 or 60.0%).
- Most violent deaths resulted from firearm injury (791 or 59.4%).
- Most fatal injuries (855 or 64.2%) were inflicted on private property such as a house or apartment.
- Blood alcohol was tested on 1276 violent death victims and was present in 35.0%.
- The violent death rate was lowest among married persons (14.5 per 100,000) and persons with post-high school education (11.2 per 100,000).
- Most deaths occurred in May (135 or 10.1%) while the fewest occurred in August and December (98 or 7.4% each month).

**Table 2. Number, Percent and Rate of Violent Death Victims in Virginia by Race/Ethnicity and Sex: 2003**

	No.	Male %	Rate	No.	Female %	Rate	No.	Total %	Rate <sup>1</sup>
White	642	62.8	23.5	224	72.5	8.1	866	65.0	15.7
Black	323	31.6	44.7	67	21.7	8.5	390	29.3	25.9
Hispanic	31	3.0	14.6	9	2.9	4.9	40	3.0	10.1
Other	23	2.3	13.1	7	2.3	3.7	30	2.2	8.3
Unknown	3	0.3	-	2	0.6	-	6 <sup>2</sup>	0.5	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1022</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1332</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18.0</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

<sup>2</sup>Total includes one case where neither race/ethnicity nor sex was known.

**Table 3. Number, Percent and Rate of Violent Death Victims in Virginia by Age Group and Sex: 2003**

	Male			Female			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<1	10	1.0	19.8	5	1.6	10.3	15	1.1	15.1
1-4	7	0.7	3.5	7	2.3	3.7	14	1.1	3.6
5-9	8	0.8	3.2	2	0.6	0.8	10	0.7	2.1
10-14	11	1.1	4.1	3	1.0	1.2	14	1.1	2.7
15-19	84	8.2	31.9	9	2.9	3.7	93	7.0	18.3
20-24	148	14.5	53.0	24	7.8	9.6	172	12.9	32.5
25-34	196	19.2	38.2	49	15.9	9.7	245	18.4	24.1
35-44	190	18.6	32.5	72	23.3	12.0	262	19.7	22.2
45-54	160	15.6	30.6	56	18.1	10.2	216	16.2	20.1
55-64	75	7.3	20.8	43	14.0	11.2	118	8.9	15.8
65-74	73	7.1	35.8	18	5.8	7.5	91	6.8	20.5
75-84	37	3.6	32.9	14	4.5	7.9	51	3.8	17.6
85 and older	17	1.7	58.8	5	1.6	7.1	22	1.6	22.1
Unknown	6	0.6	-	2	0.6	-	9 <sup>2</sup>	0.7	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1022</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1332</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18.0</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

<sup>2</sup>Total includes one case where neither age group nor sex was known.

**Table 4. Number, Percent and Rate of Violent Death Victims in Virginia by Years of Education Completed: 2003<sup>1</sup>**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>2</sup>
< 9	76	7.6	26.6
9-11	177	17.6	39.5
12	410	40.8	32.0
> 12	304	30.2	11.2
Unknown	38	3.8	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1005</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21.2</b>

<sup>1</sup>Information provided for victims who were 25 years of age and older.

<sup>2</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 5. Number, Percent and Rate of Violent Death Victims in Virginia by Marital Status: 2003<sup>1</sup>**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>2</sup>
Married	452	35.6	14.5
Never Married	518	40.8	34.2
Separated or Divorced	215	16.9	31.1
Widowed	74	5.8	22.1
Unknown	11	0.9	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1270</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22.4</b>

<sup>1</sup>Information provided for victims who were 15 years of age and older.

<sup>2</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 6. Virginia Localities with the Highest Violent Death Numbers: 2003**

Locality	No.
Richmond City	120
Virginia Beach City	82
Norfolk City	70
Henrico County	57
Fairfax County	53
Newport News City	44
Chesterfield County	43
Portsmouth City	32
Roanoke City	31
Hampton City	27
Prince William County	27

**Table 7. Virginia Localities with the Highest Violent Death Rates: 2003**

Locality	Rate <sup>1</sup>
Richmond City	61.6
Craig County	58.2
Norton City	51.2
King and Queen County	45.5
Bland County	43.1
Williamsburg City	43.1
Highland County	39.9
Brunswick County	38.5
Buckingham County	37.9
Greene County	35.8

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons. These high rates may reflect a small number of deaths.



## SECTION II:

# SUICIDE

**Table 8. Number, Percent and Rate of Suicide Victims in Virginia: 2003**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	617	77.2	17.0
Female	182	22.8	4.8
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	680	85.1	12.3
Black	91	11.4	6.0
Hispanic	13	1.6	3.3
Other	15	1.9	4.1
<b>Age Group</b>			
<1	0	0.0	0.0
1-4	0	0.0	0.0
5-9	0	0.0	0.0
10-14	7	0.9	1.3
15-19	37	4.6	7.3
20-24	59	7.4	11.1
25-34	139	17.4	13.7
35-44	164	20.6	13.9
45-54	157	19.6	14.6
55-64	91	11.4	12.2
65-74	77	9.6	17.3
75-84	47	5.9	16.2
85 and older	20	2.5	20.1
Unknown	1	0.1	-
<b>Method of Fatal Injury</b>			
Firearm	447	55.9	-
Hanging or Strangulation or Asphyxiation	152	19.0	-
Poisoning	147	18.4	-
Drowning	19	2.4	-
Sharp or Blunt Instrument	18	2.3	-
Other	16	2.0	-
<b>Medical Examiner District</b>			
Central	236	29.5	12.1
Northern	188	23.5	8.2
Tidewater	152	19.0	9.6
Western	223	28.0	14.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10.8</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

## Highlighted Findings

***In 2003, there were 799 suicides in Virginia. Looking at suicide overall:***

- The average age of suicide victims was 44.
- The number of suicides was highest among persons ages 35-54 (321 or 40.2%).
- Among older persons (ages 65 and older), the suicide rate was highest at 17.3 per 100,000 or 1.6 times the state rate of 10.8.
- Roughly three of every four victims were male.
- The majority of suicide victims were White (680 or 85.1%).
- Whites committed suicide at twice the rate of Blacks (12.3 per 100,000 for Whites compared to 6.0 per 100,000 for Blacks).
- The OCME Western District experienced the highest suicide rate (14.2 per 100,000).
- The highest suicide rates were in Craig County (58.2 per 100,000) and Norton City (51.2 per 100,000).
- Craig County's suicide rate (58.2) was 5.4 times higher than the state rate.
- A firearm was used in 55.9% of all suicides and in the majority of male suicides (62.7%).
- The primary method of suicide among females was poisoning (40.7%).
- The suicide rate was lowest among married persons (10.7 per 100,000) and highest among separated or divorced persons (22.4 per 100,000).
- The suicide rate was lowest among persons with post-high school education (8.6 per 100,000) and highest among persons with some high school education (23.0 per 100,000).

**Table 9. Number, Percent and Rate of Suicide Victims in Virginia by Race/Ethnicity and Sex: 2003**

	Male			Female			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
White	516	83.6	18.9	164	90.1	5.9	680	85.1	12.3
Black	79	12.8	10.9	12	6.6	1.5	91	11.4	6.0
Hispanic	11	1.8	5.2	2	1.1	1.1	13	1.6	3.3
Other	11	1.8	6.3	4	2.2	2.1	15	1.9	4.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10.8</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 10. Number, Percent and Rate of Suicide Victims in Virginia by Age Group and Sex: 2003**

	Male			Female			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
10-14	6	0.9	2.3	1	0.5	0.4	7	0.9	1.3
15-19	35	5.7	13.3	2	1.1	0.8	37	4.6	7.3
20-24	51	8.3	18.3	8	4.4	3.2	59	7.4	11.1
25-34	109	17.7	21.2	30	16.5	6.0	139	17.4	13.7
35-44	119	19.3	20.4	45	24.7	7.5	164	20.6	13.9
45-54	119	19.3	22.8	38	21.0	6.9	157	19.6	14.6
55-64	60	9.7	16.7	31	17.1	8.1	91	11.4	12.2
65-74	64	10.4	31.4	13	7.1	5.4	77	9.6	17.3
75-84	36	5.8	32.0	11	6.0	6.2	47	5.9	16.2
85 and older	17	2.7	58.8	3	1.6	4.3	20	2.5	20.1
Unknown	1	0.2	-	0	0.0	-	1	0.1	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10.8</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 11. Number, Percent and Rate of Suicide Victims in Virginia by Years of Education Completed: 2003<sup>1</sup>**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>2</sup>
< 9	50	7.2	17.5
9-11	103	14.8	23.0
12	284	40.9	22.1
> 12	233	33.5	8.6
Unknown	25	3.6	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14.7</b>

<sup>1</sup>Information provided for victims who were 25 years of age and older.

<sup>2</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 12. Number, Percent and Rate of Suicide Victims in Virginia by Marital Status: 2003<sup>1</sup>**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>2</sup>
Married	335	42.3	10.7
Never Married	236	29.8	15.6
Separated or Divorced	155	19.6	22.4
Widowed	59	7.5	17.7
Unknown	6	0.8	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14.0</b>

<sup>1</sup>Information provided for victims who were 15 years of age and older.

<sup>2</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.



**Table 13. Virginia Localities with the Highest Suicide Numbers: 2003**

Locality	No.
Fairfax County	45
Virginia Beach City	45
Henrico County	34
Chesterfield County	30
Norfolk City	23
Richmond City	21
Alexandria City	18
Chesapeake City	18
Prince William County	17
Loudoun County	16

**Table 14. Virginia Localities with the Highest Suicide Rates: 2003**

Locality	Rate <sup>1</sup>
Craig County	58.2
Norton City	51.2
Bland County	43.1
Williamsburg City	43.1
Nelson County	33.5
Fredericksburg City	29.7
Appomattox County	29.2
Essex County	29.2
Bristol City	29.1
Sussex County	25.1

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons. These high rates may reflect a small number of deaths.

## Characteristics of Suicides

In 2003, the characteristics of most suicides (756 or 94.6%) were noted as detailed in Table 15.

**Table 15. Characteristics<sup>1</sup> of Suicide in Virginia: 2003  
(Number and Percent; N=756)**

Victim Characteristics	No.	%
Current Mental Health Problem	338	44.7
Current Depressed Mood	311	41.1
Current Mental Health Treatment	297	39.3
Diagnosis of Depression	246	32.5
Physical Health Problem	171	22.6
History of Previous Suicide Attempt	150	19.8
Problem with Alcohol	99	13.1
Problem with Other Substance	86	11.4
Prior Mental Health Treatment	62	8.2
Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder	49	6.5
<b>Relationship Characteristics</b>		
Intimate Partner Problem	227	30.0
Death of Family Member or Friend within Past Five Years	51	6.7
Non-intimate Relationship Problem	38	5.0
Perpetrator of Interpersonal Violence within Past Month	21	2.8
Suicide of Family Member or Friend within Past Five Years	9	1.2
Victim of Interpersonal Violence within Past Month	4	0.5
<b>Life Stressor Characteristics</b>		
Recent Criminal Legal Problem	99	13.1
Job Problem	75	10.0
Financial Problem	71	9.4
Non-criminal Legal Problem	16	2.1
School Problem	9	1.2
<b>Event Characteristics</b>		
Left a Suicide Note	228	30.2
Disclosed Intent to Commit Suicide	184	24.3
Crisis within Two Weeks of the Suicide	159	21.0
Other Suicide Circumstances	15	2.0

<sup>1</sup>More than one characteristic may be noted for each suicide victim. Totals will not equal 756.

**Table 16. Most Common Suicide Characteristics<sup>1</sup> in Virginia by Age Group: 2003 (Percent; N=755<sup>2</sup>)**

	10-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85 and older
	n=7	n=88	n=130	n=155	n=149	n=89	n=75	n=45	n=17
<b>Current Depressed Mood</b>	-	37.5	32.3	38.7	40.3	51.7	46.7	44.4	70.6
<b>Current Mental Health Problem</b>	42.9	29.5	41.5	45.8	55.7	53.9	46.7	24.4	35.3
<b>Current Mental Health Treatment</b>	42.9	26.1	35.4	39.4	48.3	48.3	44.0	-	35.3
<b>Left a Suicide Note</b>	42.9	33.0	33.8	28.4	33.6	24.7	26.7	24.4	29.4
<b>Disclosed Intent to Commit Suicide</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42.2	29.4
<b>Crisis within Two Weeks of the Suicide</b>	-	-	-	28.4	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Physical Health Problem</b>	-	-	-	-	-	30.3	54.7	73.3	76.5
<b>Intimate Partner Problem</b>	-	41.0	46.9	43.2	27.5	-	-	-	-
<b>Non-Intimate Relationship Problem</b>	42.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>School Problem</b>	42.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<sup>1</sup>More than one characteristic may be noted for each suicide victim.

<sup>2</sup>The total in this Table is different than in Table 15 because age group was unknown in one case.

# VETERAN SUICIDE VICTIMS IN VIRGINIA: 2003

**Table 17. Number and Percent of Veteran Suicide Victims in Virginia: 2003**

Sex	No.	%
Male	183	97.9
Female	4	2.1
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White	166	88.8
Black	18	9.6
Hispanic	2	1.1
Other	1	0.5
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-19	1	0.5
20-24	6	3.2
25-34	20	10.7
35-44	29	15.5
45-54	25	13.4
55-64	38	20.3
65-74	39	20.9
75-84	23	12.3
85 and older	6	3.2
<b>Method of Fatal Injury</b>		
Firearm	132	70.7
Hanging or Strangulation or Asphyxiation	23	12.3
Poisoning	23	12.3
Sharp or Blunt Instrument	6	3.2
Fall	1	0.5
Fire or Burn	1	0.5
Motor Vehicle	1	0.5
<b>Medical Examiner District</b>		
Central	48	25.7
Northern	38	20.3
Tidewater	51	27.3
Western	50	26.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>

## Highlighted Findings

- ▶ Roughly one in four suicide victims (187 or 23.4%) were veterans of the armed forces:
  - ▶ 56.7% were ages 55 and older;
  - ▶ 97.9% were male;
  - ▶ 88.8% were White; and
  - ▶ 70.7% used a firearm.
- ▶ The localities with the greatest number of veteran suicides were Virginia Beach City (16), Fairfax County (10) and Henrico County (10). In Virginia Beach City, 35.6% of suicide victims were veterans.
- ▶ Blood alcohol level was tested in the majority of veteran victims (184 or 98.4%) and was positive in 69 (37.5%).
- ▶ The greatest number of veteran suicides occurred in May (25 or 13.4%). The greatest percentage of suicides (40.1%) occurred in the fall months (September through December).

# VETERAN SUICIDE VICTIMS IN VIRGINIA: 2003

The characteristics of victims or the event were noted in most veteran suicides (179 or 95.7%). In this population, the significance of mental and physical health is demonstrated by Table 18 below.

**Table 18. Characteristics<sup>1</sup> of Veteran Suicide in Virginia: 2003  
(Number and Percent; N=179)**

Victim Characteristics	No.	%
Current Mental Health Problem	74	41.3
Current Depressed Mood	86	48.0
Current Mental Health Treatment	64	35.8
Diagnosis of Depression	52	29.1
Physical Health Problem	62	34.6
History of Previous Suicide Attempt	24	13.4
Problem with Alcohol	29	16.2
Problem with Other Substance	10	5.6
Prior Mental Health Treatment	8	4.5
Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder	5	2.8
<b>Relationship Characteristics</b>		
Intimate Partner Problem	44	24.6
Death of Family Member or Friend within Past Five Years	18	10.1
Non-intimate Relationship Problem	4	2.2
Perpetrator of Interpersonal Violence within Past Month	7	4.0
Suicide of Family Member or Friend within Past Five Years	3	1.7
Victim of Interpersonal Violence within Past Month	0	0.0
<b>Life Stressor Characteristics</b>		
Recent Criminal Legal Problem	16	9.0
Job Problem	14	7.8
Financial Problem	12	6.7
Non-criminal Legal Problem	2	1.1
School Problem	0	0.0
<b>Event Characteristics</b>		
Left a Suicide Note	45	25.1
Disclosed Intent to Commit Suicide	50	27.9
Crisis within Two Weeks of the Suicide	35	19.6
Other Suicide Circumstances	2	1.1

<sup>1</sup>More than one characteristic may be noted for each suicide victim. Totals will not equal 179.



## SECTION III:

**Table 19. Number, Percent and Rate of Homicide Victims  
in Virginia: 2003**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	338	77.7	9.3
Female	97	22.3	2.6
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	130	29.9	2.4
Black	269	61.9	17.8
Hispanic	24	5.5	6.1
Other	11	2.5	3.0
Unknown	1	0.2	-
<b>Age Group</b>			
<1	9	2.1	9.1
1-4	7	1.6	1.8
5-9	8	1.8	1.7
10-14	7	1.6	1.3
15-19	50	11.5	9.8
20-24	103	23.7	19.4
25-34	92	21.1	9.0
35-44	80	18.4	6.8
45-54	43	9.9	4.0
55-64	17	3.9	2.3
65-74	11	2.5	2.5
75-84	4	0.9	1.4
85 and older	2	0.5	2.0
Unknown	2	0.5	-
<b>Method of Fatal Injury</b>			
Firearm	312	71.8	-
Sharp or Blunt Instrument	78	18.0	-
Hanging or Strangulation or Asphyxiation	14	3.2	-
Fire or Burn	7	1.6	-
Shaking	4	0.9	-
Poisoning	3	0.7	-
Personal Weapon	1	0.2	-
Intentional Neglect	1	0.2	-
Fall	1	0.2	-
Other	5	1.1	-
Unknown	9	2.1	-
<b>Medical Examiner District</b>			
Central	190	43.7	9.8
Northern	45	10.3	2.0
Tidewater	137	31.5	8.7
Western	63	14.5	4.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5.9</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.



## Highlighted Findings

- In 2003, there were 435 homicides in Virginia, representing a state homicide rate of 5.9 per 100,000 persons.
- The average age of homicide victims was 27 years.
- Approximately four of every five victims was male.
- Males in the age group 20-24 had the highest homicide rate at 31.5 per 100,000.
- Males died from homicide at 3.6 times the rate of females.
- Looking across race/ethnicity and sex, the majority of victims were Black males (66.0%; rate 30.9).
- Blacks died from homicide at 7.4 times the rate of Whites and 2.9 times the rate of Hispanics (17.8 per 100,000 compared to 2.4 for Whites and 6.1 for Hispanics).
- Central District OCME had the highest number of homicide victims (190 or 43.7%) and the highest homicide rate (9.8 per 100,000). Despite having the highest population density, the Northern District OCME had the lowest number of homicide victims (45 or 10.3%) and the lowest homicide rate (2.0 per 100,000).
- Richmond City experienced the highest number of homicides (99 or 22.8%) and the highest homicide rate of any locality in Virginia (50.8 per 100,000).
- A firearm was used in the majority of homicides (71.8%).
- Blood alcohol, tested on 415 homicide victims (95.4%), was present in 38.6%.
- Most homicide-related fatal injuries (225 or 51.7%) were inflicted on private property such as a house or apartment. Other common locations included: street, sidewalk or alley (92 or 21.1%); motor vehicle (27 or 6.2%); and parking lot or public garage (25 or 5.7%).
- The homicide rate was lowest among widowed persons (2.7 per 100,000) and persons with post-high school education (2.0 per 100,000).
- Eight law enforcement officers were killed while on duty.

**Table 20. Number, Percent and Rate of Homicide Victims in Virginia by Race/Ethnicity and Sex: 2003**

	Male			Female			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
White	88	26.0	3.2	42	43.3	1.5	130	29.9	2.4
Black	223	66.0	30.9	46	47.4	5.9	269	61.9	17.8
Hispanic	17	5.0	8.0	7	7.3	3.8	24	5.5	6.1
Other	10	3.0	5.7	1	1.0	0.5	11	2.5	3.0
Unknown	-	-	-	1	1.0	-	1	0.2	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5.9</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 21. Number, Percent and Rate of Homicide Victims in Virginia by Age Group and Sex: 2003**

	Male			Female			Total		
	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
< 1	6	1.8	11.9	3	3.1	6.2	9	2.1	9.1
1-4	5	1.5	2.5	2	2.1	1.0	7	1.6	1.8
5-9	6	1.8	2.4	2	2.1	0.8	8	1.8	1.7
10-14	5	1.5	1.9	2	2.1	0.8	7	1.6	1.3
15-19	43	12.7	16.3	7	7.2	2.9	50	11.5	9.8
20-24	88	26.0	31.5	15	15.5	6.0	103	23.7	19.4
25-34	78	23.0	15.2	14	14.4	2.8	92	21.1	9.0
35-44	56	16.6	9.6	24	24.7	4.0	80	18.4	6.8
45-54	32	9.5	6.1	11	11.3	2.0	43	9.9	4.0
55-64	10	3.0	2.8	7	7.2	1.8	17	3.9	2.3
65-74	7	2.0	3.4	4	4.1	1.7	11	2.5	2.5
75-84	1	0.3	0.9	3	3.1	1.7	4	0.9	1.4
85 and older	0	0.0	0.0	2	2.1	2.8	2	0.5	2.0
Unknown	1	0.3	-	1	1.0	-	2	0.5	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5.9</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 22. Number, Percent and Rate of Homicide Victims in Virginia by Years of Education Completed: 2003<sup>1</sup>**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>2</sup>
< 9	20	8.0	7.0
9-11	61	24.5	13.6
12	103	41.4	8.0
> 12	55	22.1	2.0
Unknown	10	4.0	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5.3</b>

<sup>1</sup>Information provided for victims who were 25 years of age and older.

<sup>2</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 23. Number, Percent and Rate of Homicide Victims in Virginia by Marital Status: 2003<sup>1</sup>**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>2</sup>
Married	98	24.4	3.1
Never Married	244	60.7	16.1
Separated or Divorced	47	11.7	6.8
Widowed	9	2.2	2.7
Unknown	4	1.0	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7.1</b>

<sup>1</sup>Information provided for victims who were 15 years of age and older.

<sup>2</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

**Table 24. Virginia Localities with the Highest Homicide Numbers: 2003**

Locality	No.
Richmond City	99
Norfolk City	42
Newport News City	28
Virginia Beach City	27
Henrico County	21
Portsmouth City	17
Roanoke City	16
Chesterfield County	12
Hampton City	12
Prince William County	8
Petersburg City	8

**Table 25. Virginia Localities with the Highest Homicide Rates: 2003**

Locality	Rate <sup>1</sup>
Richmond City	50.8
Buckingham County	25.3
Petersburg City	24.2
Greene County	17.9
Norfolk City	17.4
Roanoke City	17.2
Portsmouth City	17.1
Newport News City	15.4
King and Queen County	15.2
King William County	14.2

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons. These high rates may reflect a small number of deaths.

## Characteristics of Homicides

In 2003, characteristics of 313 homicides (72.0%) were noted in death investigative reports. Table 26 describes homicide event and victim characteristics.

**Table 26. Characteristics<sup>1</sup> of Homicide in Virginia: 2003  
(Number and Percent; N=313)**

Event Characteristics	No.	%
Argument, Abuse or Conflict	84	26.8
Drug Related	75	24.0
Precipitated by Another Crime	74	23.6
Intimate Partner Violence Related	70	22.4
Argument over Money or Property	28	8.9
Mutual Physical Fight	22	7.0
Drive-by Shooting	18	5.8
Intimate Partner Jealousy or Rivalry	16	5.1
Gang Related	4	1.3
Random Violence	3	1.0
Mentally Ill Suspect	2	0.6
Mercy Killing	1	0.3
Hate Crime	0	0.0
Justifiable Self Defense	0	0.0
Terrorist Attack	0	0.0
Victim Characteristics		
Used a Weapon	18	5.8
Bystander	9	2.9
Police Officer on Duty	8	2.6
Intervened to Assist a Crime Victim	0	0.0

<sup>1</sup>More than one characteristic may be noted for each homicide victim. Totals will not equal 313.

**Table 27. Number, Percent and Rate of Legal Intervention Death Victims in Virginia: 2003**

	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	12	100.0	0.3
Female	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	3	25.0	0.1
Black	7	58.4	0.5
Hispanic	1	8.3	0.3
Other	1	8.3	0.3
<b>Age Group</b>			
0-19	0	0.0	0.0
20-24	5	41.7	1.0
25-34	5	41.7	0.5
35-44	1	8.3	0.1
45-54	1	8.3	0.1
55 and older	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Years of Education Completed<sup>2</sup></b>			
< 9	1	8.3	0.4
9-11	2	16.7	0.4
12	7	58.3	0.2
> 12	2	16.7	0.1
<b>Marital Status<sup>3</sup></b>			
Married	3	25.0	0.1
Never Married	9	75.0	0.6
Separated or Divorced	0	0.0	0.0
Widowed	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Medical Examiner District</b>			
Central	4	33.3	0.2
Northern	0	0.0	0.0
Tidewater	6	50.0	0.4
Western	2	16.7	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.2</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.

<sup>2</sup>Where applicable, rate calculated for victims who were 25 years of age and older.

<sup>3</sup>Where applicable, rate calculated for victims who were 15 years of age and older.

### Highlighted Findings

- In a legal intervention death, the victim is killed by a police officer or other peace officer (a person with specified legal authority to use deadly force, such as a military police officer acting in the line of duty).
- In 2003, all 12 legal intervention victims were male.
- The majority (10 or 83.4%) of victims were between the ages of 20-34. The average age of victims was 26 years.
- The majority of victims were Black (7 or 58.4%).
- Most victims (7 or 58.3%) had a high school education and most were never married (9 or 75.0%).
- A blood alcohol level was drawn on all victims, with positive findings in seven (58.3%).
- In each legal intervention incident, the victim used a weapon and law enforcement responded in self-defense. In five incidents (41.7%), there was a precipitating crime, such as robbery or assault or another homicide.
- In addition to the 12 legal intervention victims, five law enforcement officers died as homicide victims in these incidents.



# UNINTENTIONAL FIREARM DEATH

## SECTION IV:

Table 28. Number, Percent and Rate of Unintentional Firearm Injury Death Victims in Virginia: 2003

	No.	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	17	94.4	0.5
Female	1	5.6	<0.1
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	10	55.5	0.2
Black	6	33.3	0.4
Hispanic	1	5.6	0.3
Other	1	5.6	0.3
<b>Age Group</b>			
<1	0	0.0	0.0
1-4	0	0.0	0.0
5-9	2	11.1	0.4
10-14	0	0.0	0.0
15-19	5	27.8	1.0
20-24	3	16.7	0.6
25-34	2	11.1	0.2
35-44	4	22.2	0.3
45-54	0	0.0	0.0
55-64	0	0.0	0.0
65-74	2	11.1	0.4
75-84	0	0.0	0.0
85 and older	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Years of Education Completed<sup>2</sup></b>			
< 9	2	11.1	-
9-11	4	22.2	0.2
12	7	38.9	0.2
> 12	4	22.2	0.1
Unknown	1	5.6	-
<b>Marital Status<sup>3</sup></b>			
Married	6	33.4	0.2
Never Married	12	66.6	0.7
Separated or Divorced	0	0.0	0.0
Widowed	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Medical Examiner District</b>			
Central	4	22.2	0.2
Northern	4	22.2	0.2
Tidewater	6	33.4	0.4
Western	4	22.2	0.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.2</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rate per 100,000 persons.<sup>2</sup>Where applicable, rate calculated for victims who were 25 years of age and older.<sup>3</sup>Where applicable, rate calculated for victims who were 15 years of age and older.



### *Highlighted Findings*

- In 2003, nine of every ten unintentional firearm death victims were male.
- The average age of victims was 22.5 years.
- Most victims were between the ages of 15-24 (8 or 44.5%).
- Six victims were between the ages of 5-18; seven of the firearm handlers were between the ages of 10-16.
- The unintentional firearm death rate was highest among persons ages 15-19 (1.0 per 100,000) and persons ages 20-24 (0.6 per 100,000).
- While the majority of victims were White (10 or 55.5%), the unintentional firearm death rate was highest among Blacks (0.4 per 100,000).
- The unintentional firearm death rate among Blacks was two times higher than the state rate (0.2 per 100,000) and twice the rate among Whites (0.4 per 100,000 compared to 0.2 per 100,000 for Whites).
- Tidewater District OCME had the highest number of unintentional firearm deaths (6 or 33.4%).
- Most fatal accidental firearm injuries (10 or 55.6%) were sustained on private property such as a house or apartment, four (22.2%) in natural areas and four (22.2%) in other settings (motor vehicle, parking lot or parking garage, street or sidewalk).
- Blood alcohol, tested on 17 victims, was positive in four (23.5%).
- In 12 incidents, the victim was unintentionally shot by another person; in six incidents, the victim shot themselves.

### *Characteristics of Unintentional Firearm Deaths*

The characteristics surrounding most unintentional firearm deaths (17 or 94.4%) were provided. In the majority of deaths (10 or 58.8%), a single characteristic was noted including the trigger being pulled, the firearm being shown, target shooting, and the handler thinking the firearm was unloaded. Table 29 identifies the characteristics.

**Table 29. Characteristics<sup>1</sup> of Unintentional Firearm Deaths in Virginia: 2003 (Number and Percent; N=17)**

Context	No.	%
Hunting	5	29.4
Playing with Gun	4	23.5
Showing Gun	2	11.8
Target Shooting	1	5.9
Loading or Unloading Firearm	1	5.9
Firearm Handler Behavior		
Pulled Trigger Unintentionally	6	35.3
Thought Firearm was Unloaded	3	17.6
Dropped Firearm	2	11.8

<sup>1</sup>More than one characteristic may be noted for each unintentional firearm death. Totals will not equal 17.

SECTION V:

Table 30. Number, Percent and Rate of Child Violent Death Victims in Virginia: 2003

	Number	%	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	62	74.7	6.7
Female	21	25.3	2.4
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	35	42.2	2.8
Black	40	48.2	9.1
Hispanic	7	8.4	5.7
Other	1	1.2	1.1
<b>Age Group</b>			
<1	15	18.1	15.1
1-4	14	16.9	3.6
5-9	10	12.0	2.1
10-14	14	16.9	2.7
15-17	30	36.1	9.9
<b>Violent Death Type</b>			
Homicide	46	55.4	2.6
Suicide	19	22.9	1.1
Undetermined	14	16.9	0.8
Unintentional Firearm	4	4.8	0.2
Legal Intervention	0	0.0	0.0
Terrorism	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Method of Fatal Injury</b>			
Firearm	39	47.0	2.2
Sharp or Blunt Instrument	13	15.7	0.7
Hanging or Strangulation or Asphyxiation	5	6.0	0.3
Shaking	4	4.8	0.2
Poisoning	3	3.6	0.2
Fire or Burn	3	3.6	0.2
Personal Weapon	1	1.2	<0.1
Other	2	2.4	0.1
Unknown	13	15.7	0.7
<b>Medical Examiner District</b>			
Central	32	38.5	6.8
Northern	19	22.9	6.4
Tidewater	16	19.3	7.6
Western	16	19.3	9.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.6</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rates per 100,000 persons.

## Highlighted Findings

- In 2003, violent death claimed the lives of 83 children in Virginia – almost 7 deaths per month.
- The average age of violent death victims was 11 years.
- Children under age 1 had the highest violent death rate at 15.1 per 100,000 – more than three times the state child violent death rate (4.6 per 100,000 persons). Children between the ages of 5-9 had the lowest child violent death rate at 2.1 per 100,000 persons.
- Roughly three of every four victims were male.
- Almost one-half of the victims were Black.
- Black children died from violent death at nearly 3.3 times the rate of White children and 1.6 times the rate of Hispanic children (9.1 per 100,000 compared to 2.8 for Whites and 5.7 for Hispanics).
- Western District OCME had the highest child violent death rate (9.3 per 100,000) while the Northern District OCME had the lowest rate (6.4 per 100,000).
- The Virginia localities with the greatest number of child violent deaths included: Richmond City, Prince William County, Fairfax County, Henrico County and the Cities of Virginia Beach and Norfolk.
- The majority of deaths resulted from homicide (46 or 55.4%).
- Most child violent deaths resulted from firearm injury (39 or 47.0%).
- The greatest number of child violent deaths occurred in April (13 or 15.7%) while the fewest occurred in May (4 or 4.8%).
- Most fatal injuries (60 or 72.3%) were inflicted on private property such as a house or apartment.

**Table 31. Number of Child Violent Death Victims in Virginia by Race/Ethnicity and Violent Death Type: 2003**

	Suicide	Homicide	Unintentional Firearm	Undetermined	Total
White	13	12	2	8	35
Black	5	28	2	5	40
Hispanic	1	6	0	0	7
Other	0	0	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>83</b>

**Table 32. Number of Child Violent Death Victims in Virginia by Violent Death Type and Age Group: 2003**

	0	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-17	Total
Suicide	0	0	0	7	12	19
Homicide	9	7	8	7	15	46
Unintentional Firearm	0	0	2	0	2	4
Undetermined	6	7	0	0	1	14
Legal Intervention	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terrorism	0	0	0	0	0	0
	15	14	10	14	30	83

**Table 33. Number of Child Violent Death Victims in Virginia by Method of Fatal Injury and Age Group: 2003**

	0	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-17	Total
Firearm	0	0	9	6	24	39
Sharp or Blunt Instrument	4	4	1	1	3	13
Hanging or Strangulation or Asphyxiation	1	0	0	3	1	5
Shaking	2	2	0	0	0	4
Poisoning	0	0	0	3	0	3
Fire or Burn	1	1	0	0	1	3
Personal Weapon	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other	1	1	0	0	0	2
Unknown	5	6	0	1	1	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>83</b>

**Table 34. Number of Child Violent Death Victims in Virginia by Medical Examiner District and Violent Death Type: 2003**

	Suicide	Homicide	Unintentional Firearm	Undetermined	Total
Central	6	19	1	6	32
Northern	4	9	1	5	19
Tidewater	2	12	1	1	16
Western	7	6	1	2	16
	19	46	4	14	83

## SECTION VI:

The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) is an active violent death surveillance system that employs standard definitions, a coding scheme, uniform data elements, a dedicated software application and a relational database. The system incorporates data from multiple sources to capture greater detail about each violent death. In NVDRS, the unit of surveillance is an “incident” and incorporates within one record the information about each victim and suspect, their relationship, the method of fatal injury and the unique characteristics surrounding each violent death.

NVDRS defines violent death cases based upon the underlying cause of death on a victim’s death certificate. This cause of death is translated into an ICD 10 Code (an alphanumeric coding scheme for classifying diseases and health problems) that conforms to an international standard. This creates a basis for data comparison across states and countries. This coding scheme fits NVDRS violent death “types” – suicide, homicide, unintentional firearm fatalities, legal intervention, deaths of undetermined manner and deaths resulting from acts of terrorism. Readers who wish more detail on NVDRS definitions and concepts are directed to a copy of the NVDRS Coding Manual which is available on the Internet at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/profiles/nvdrs/publications.htm>.

Virginia’s violent death cases are ascertained through the Medical Examiner who, by Statue, has jurisdiction over every death identified and included in NVDRS. Cases so identified are compared to violent death cases reported by the Virginia Center of Health Statistics utilizing the ICD 10 Codes prescribed by NVDRS. This reconciliation process assures comprehensive case ascertainment and forms the basis for violent death incidents.

Once violent death cases are ascertained, each victim’s record is reviewed by a Surveillance Coordinator (Coordinator) – an individual intensively trained in the concepts and definitions of NVDRS and the functions and use of the software application. The Coordinator considers all relevant information from primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources include forensic pathology, forensic science, law enforcement, vital records, health statistics, and social services. Secondary data sources include hospital medical records, mental health records, and newspaper articles. The Coordinator synthesizes the information, abstracts relevant pieces and manually enters them into the software application. By weighing NVDRS definitions and concepts against the information gleaned from available data sources, the Coordinator determines each victim’s violent death type. The NVDRS software was developed with logic and edit features that minimize erroneous entries. External data quality review activities ensure data accuracy.

Information in this report is presented using three statistics: the number of cases in a given category; the percent of cases in a given category; and the rate for selected categories. Rates specific to population, age group, sex, race and ethnicity were calculated utilizing Virginia NCHS Bridged – Race Population Estimates for 2003 available at <http://vdhweb/healthstats/stats.asp>. Rates specific to marital status, education and veterans were calculated utilizing Virginia Selected Social Characteristics: 2003 from the 2003 American Community Survey Data available from the U.S. Census Bureau at <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

Age averages in this report are median measures. Age group categories parallel those commonly used in injury and mortality statistics reports. This report uses race/ethnicity categories of Black, White, Hispanic and Other. The category Other incorporates Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian and any races not previously mentioned.



## APPENDICES

Number, Percent, and Rate of Violent Death Type by Virginia Locality<sup>1</sup>: 2003

	Violent Death		Suicide		Homicide		Legal Intervention		Unintentional Firearm		Undetermined	
COUNTY	No.	Rate <sup>2</sup>	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Accomack County	7	17.9	4	10.2	1	2.6	1	2.6	-	-	1	2.6
Albemarle County	10	11.4	6	6.8	4	4.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Alleghany County	4	23.8	4	23.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amelia County	3	25.5	2	17.0	1	8.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amherst County	5	15.7	2	6.3	2	6.3	-	-	-	-	1	3.1
Appomattox County	4	29.2	4	29.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arlington County	15	8.0	13	6.9	2	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Augusta County	16	23.7	12	17.8	4	5.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bath County	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bedford County	8	12.8	8	12.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bland County	3	43.1	3	43.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Botetourt County	4	12.7	2	6.4	2	6.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brunswick County	7	38.5	4	22.0	2	11.0	-	-	1	5.5	-	-
Buchanan County	4	15.6	3	11.7	1	3.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buckingham County	6	37.9	1	6.3	4	25.3	-	-	1	6.3	-	-
Campbell County	5	9.7	4	7.8	1	1.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Caroline County	6	25.9	5	21.6	1	4.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carroll County	3	10.2	2	6.8	1	3.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charles City County	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charlotte County	1	8.0	-	-	-	-	1	8.0	-	-	-	-
Chesterfield County	43	15.5	30	10.8	12	4.3	1	0.4	-	-	-	-
Clarke County	2	15.0	2	15.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Craig County	3	58.2	3	58.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culpeper County	7	18.2	6	15.6	1	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cumberland County	1	10.9	1	10.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dickenson County	5	31.0	4	24.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6.2
Dinwiddie County	8	32.2	6	24.1	2	8.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Essex County	3	29.2	3	29.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fairfax County	53	5.3	45	4.5	7	0.7	-	-	-	-	1	0.1
Fauquier County	7	11.4	6	9.8	1	1.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Floyd County	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fluvanna County	2	8.7	2	8.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Franklin County	12	24.4	8	16.3	1	2.0	1	2.0	1	2.0	1	2.0
Frederick County	7	10.8	6	9.3	1	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Giles County	2	11.8	2	11.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gloucester County	7	19.1	6	16.3	1	2.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goochland County	4	22.1	2	11.0	2	11.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grayson County	4	24.2	4	24.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Greene County	6	35.8	2	11.9	3	17.9	1	6.0	-	-	-	-
Greensville County	2	17.3	2	17.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Halifax County	7	19.1	2	5.5	4	10.9	-	-	-	-	1	2.7
Hanover County	10	10.6	8	8.5	2	2.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Henrico County	57	21.0	34	12.5	21	7.7	-	-	-	-	2	0.7
Henry County	18	31.5	11	19.3	5	8.8	-	-	-	-	2	3.5
Highland County	1	39.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	40.0	-	-
Isle of Wight County	5	15.7	4	12.5	1	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
James City County	5	9.3	4	7.5	1	1.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
King and Queen County	3	45.5	1	15.2	1	15.2	-	-	1	15.2	-	-
King George County	1	5.5	1	5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
King William County	3	21.2	1	7.1	2	14.2	-	-	-	-	-	-

<sup>1</sup>These figures represent locality of injury, not death.<sup>2</sup>Rates per 100,000 persons.

Number, Percent, and Rate of Violent Death Type by Virginia Locality<sup>1</sup>: 2003

COUNTY	Violent Death		Suicide		Homicide		Legal Intervention		Unintentional Firearm		Undetermined	
	No.	Rate <sup>2</sup>	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Lancaster County	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lee County	8	33.7	5	21.1	2	8.4	-	-	-	-	1	4.2
Loudoun County	18	8.1	16	7.2	2	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Louisa County	7	25.0	5	17.8	1	3.6	-	-	-	-	1	3.6
Lunenburg County	2	15.2	2	15.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Madison County	1	7.7	1	7.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mathews County	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mecklenburg County	7	21.5	6	18.4	1	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Middlesex County	3	29.4	2	19.6	1	9.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Montgomery County	8	9.3	4	4.7	1	1.2	1	1.2	-	-	2	2.3
Nelson County	5	33.5	5	33.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Kent County	1	6.7	1	6.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northampton County	1	7.5	1	7.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northumberland County	3	23.5	2	15.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7.8
Nottoway County	2	12.8	1	6.4	-	-	-	-	1	6.4	-	-
Orange County	2	7.1	2	7.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Page County	6	25.4	5	21.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4.2
Patrick County	4	20.9	4	20.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pittsylvania County	11	17.8	9	14.6	2	3.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Powhatan County	2	8.1	1	4.1	-	-	1	4.1	-	-	-	-
Prince Edward County	1	5.0	1	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prince George County	7	20.4	6	17.5	1	2.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prince William County	27	8.3	17	5.2	8	2.5	-	-	1	0.3	1	0.3
Pulaski County	4	11.4	4	11.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rappahannock County	2	28.1	1	14.1	1	14.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Richmond County	2	22.2	2	22.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Roanoke County	12	13.7	12	13.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rockbridge County	4	19.1	1	4.8	2	9.5	-	-	1	4.8	-	-
Rockingham County	4	5.8	4	5.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Russell County	4	13.9	3	10.4	-	-	-	-	1	3.5	-	-
Scott County	4	17.4	3	13.0	1	4.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shenandoah County	10	26.9	7	18.8	2	5.4	-	-	1	2.7	-	-
Smyth County	3	9.2	3	9.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southampton County	1	5.7	1	5.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spotsylvania County	19	17.6	14	13.0	4	3.7	-	-	-	-	1	0.9
Stafford County	13	11.7	8	7.2	4	3.6	-	-	-	-	1	0.9
Surry County	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sussex County	3	25.1	3	25.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tazewell County	12	27.1	9	20.3	3	6.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Warren County	1	3.0	1	3.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Washington County	7	13.6	6	11.7	1	1.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Westmoreland County	3	17.7	3	17.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wise County	9	21.5	7	16.7	1	2.4	-	-	-	-	1	2.4
Wythe County	6	21.5	6	21.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
York County	6	9.8	6	9.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1332	18.0	799	10.8	435	5.9	12	0.2	18	0.2	68	0.9

<sup>1</sup>These figures represent locality of injury, not death.<sup>2</sup>Rates per 100,000 persons.

Number, Percent, and Rate of Violent Death Type by Virginia Locality<sup>1</sup>: 2003

	Violent Death		Suicide		Homicide		Legal Intervention		Unintentional Firearm		Undetermined	
CITY	No.	Rate <sup>2</sup>	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Alexandria City	22	17.1	18	14.0	4	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bedford City	1	15.8	1	15.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bristol City	6	34.9	5	29.1	1	5.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buena Vista City	1	15.8	1	15.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charlottesville City	9	23.0	8	20.4	1	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chesapeake City	22	10.4	18	8.5	3	1.4	-	-	1	0.5	-	-
Colonial Heights	2	11.6	1	5.8	1	5.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Covington City	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Danville City	13	27.7	9	19.2	4	8.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Emporia City	1	17.7	1	17.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fairfax City	6	27.2	3	13.6	2	9.1	-	-	-	-	1	4.5
Falls Church	1	9.5	1	9.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Franklin City	2	24.2	-	-	1	12.1	-	-	1	12.1	-	-
Fredericksburg City	7	34.7	6	29.7	1	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Galax City	1	15.0	1	15.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hampton City	27	18.4	13	8.9	12	8.2	-	-	-	-	2	1.4
Harrisonburg City	4	9.7	3	7.3	1	2.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hopewell City	4	17.9	2	8.9	2	8.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lexington City	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lynchburg City	11	16.9	6	9.2	5	7.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manassas City	9	24.2	4	10.8	5	13.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manassas Park City	1	9.1	-	-	1	9.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Martinsville City	3	19.8	3	19.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newport News City	44	24.2	14	7.7	28	15.4	-	-	1	0.6	1	0.6
Norfolk City	70	29.0	23	9.5	42	17.4	1	0.4	2	0.8	2	0.8
Norton City	2	51.2	2	51.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Petersburg City	9	27.2	1	3.0	8	24.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poquoson City	1	8.4	1	8.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portsmouth City	32	32.1	11	11.0	17	17.1	-	-	-	-	4	4.0
Radford City	2	13.3	2	13.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Richmond City	120	61.6	21	10.8	99	50.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Roanoke City	31	33.4	15	16.2	16	17.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salem City	5	20.3	5	20.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staunton City	5	21.0	4	16.8	1	4.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suffolk City	11	15.0	9	12.2	2	2.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Virginia Beach City	82	18.7	45	10.2	27	6.1	4	0.9	1	0.2	5	1.1
Waynesboro City	2	9.8	1	4.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4.9
Williamsburg City	5	43.1	5	43.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Winchester City	8	32.7	6	24.6	-	-	-	-	1	4.1	1	4.1
Unknown	96	-	45	-	19	-	-	-	1	-	31	-
Total	1332	18.0	799	10.8	435	5.9	12	0.2	18	0.2	68	0.9

<sup>1</sup>These figures represent locality of injury, not death.<sup>2</sup>Rates per 100,000 persons.

## APPENDICES

## MEDICAL EXAMINER DISTRICTS

### CENTRAL

**COUNTIES** of Albemarle, Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Caroline, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex, Fluvanna, Gloucester, Goochland, Greene, Greensville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, James City, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Nelson, New Kent, Northumberland, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Surry, Sussex, and Westmoreland.

**CITIES** of Charlottesville, Colonial Heights, Emporia, Fredericksburg, Hopewell, Petersburg, Richmond, and Williamsburg.

### NORTHERN

**COUNTIES** of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Madison, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, and Warren.

**CITIES** of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Winchester.

### TIDEWATER

**COUNTIES** of Accomack, Isle of Wight, Northampton, Southampton, and York.

**CITIES** of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

### WESTERN

**COUNTIES** of Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Campbell, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe.

**CITIES** of Bedford, Bristol, Buena Vista, Covington, Danville, Galax, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Norton, Radford, Roanoke, Salem, Staunton, and Waynesboro.





Additional copies of this report are available at the following website:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medexam/NVDRS.asp>

Or by calling:

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Virginia Department of Health  
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner  
400 E. Jackson Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 786-9841

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